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ABSTRACT

This book explores the hidden world of the continuation high school and analyzes the factors that limit its success. In particular, gender issues in these schools are examined: the different ways girls and boys slip in and out of the system, the different reasons, and the different consequences. The history of the continuation school and the ethnic and class composition of the student body is also discussed revealing that in the cities, African-Americans and Latinos predominate, while in the suburbs, mostly middle-class Whites attend. Also examined is how formal and hidden curricula and peer influences affect girls and boys differently and thus lead them to drop out of school. Based on information collected over a 2-year period spent in examining two continuation schools, and a month in a third school observing these programs, the conclusion is drawn that mainstream high schools attempt to mask their own dropout and pushout rates by sending marginal students to continuation schools. These schools, therefore, become as much safety valves for the system as safety nets for the students, and the resulting contradictions and stigma hamper success. Contains over 200 references, an index, and an appendix that lists the student flow data through two continuation schools. (GLR)

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